



**World Health  
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Africa**

**AFR/RC64/Conf.Doc/5**

3 November 2014

**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA**

**ORIGINAL: ENGLISH**

Sixty-fourth session

Cotonou, Republic of Benin, 3–7 November 2014

**REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS AT THE  
OPENING OF THE SIXTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE WHO REGIONAL  
COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA**

- Your Excellency Mr Thomas Yayi Boni, President of Benin,
- Honourable Ministers,
- Distinguished Delegates,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to address this important gathering. Let me begin by expressing my solidarity with the people of Africa — especially Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The world faces an unprecedented Ebola crisis that demands a massive global response. Effective regional partnerships are also vital. That is why I recently met in Addis Ababa with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission — Dr Nkosana Dlamini Zuma. I was joined at that meeting by the President of the World Bank — Dr Jim Kim. We discussed how our three organizations can help.

The United Nations continues to mobilize. I have established a first-of-its-kind emergency health operation — the United Nations Mission for Ebola emergency Response, commonly called UNMEER. I thank Ghana for hosting its headquarters.

As the international community strengthens its response, I look to you, Honourable Ministers, for your leadership. You need to ensure that preparedness plans are in place and funds are available to implement them. We will work to make sure that you have the tools and guidance you need.

Ebola is not only killing people. It is also destroying families and communities. It is eroding hard-won progress achieved through the Millennium Development Goals. As we formulate the post-2015 development agenda, we must strengthen African health systems. This is the only way to prevent future outbreaks and build vibrant, health societies.

I thank you for coming together to meet these vital goals. Please accept my best wishes for a successful meeting.

Once again, thank you.